



09 February 2023

Deputy Niamh Smyth
niamh.smyth@oireachtas.ie

Our Ref: HM/Communications

PQ9352/23: To ask the Minister for Health the number of women eligible for BreastCheck screening in each county; and the number of women currently on the waiting list for same; the number waiting 0-3, 3-6, waiting 6-12, and the number waiting 12 months, in tabular form.

Dear Deputy,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question.

BreastCheck screening locations

BreastCheck invites eligible women aged from 50 to 69 years, for breast screening on an area-by-area basis every two years. We call this process a screening 'round'.

There are four regional centres responsible for the delivery of BreastCheck throughout the country: Eccles Street and Merrion Road in Dublin; Newcastle Road in Galway; and Infirmary Road in Cork. However, not all eligible women wish, or are able, to travel to one of these regional units. An important principle for the BreastCheck programme is to offer screening services locally to women in counties and locations convenient to where they live. To achieve this, each of the four screening units operates in tandem with mobile units. The majority of women participating in BreastCheck have their mammogram in one of these units.

We create service areas for breast screening by aligning Electoral Districts with each woman's address. We aim to invite women for screening in a unit that is as close as possible to their homes. We do not record information on invites issued per county. This is because women may live in a different county to the one in which they are invited for screening.

We have 24 mobile units, three of which are new units which have increased our capacity to screen around the country over the past two years. The units move around during each screening round. The BreastCheck mobile stays in location until all eligible women who are in the catchment area for that mobile unit have been invited. We update our breast screening locations regularly on our website, [here](#).

In keeping with other breast screening programmes internationally we don't keep waiting lists but have restarted women on their screening journey since recommencing screening in October 2020.

Along with many public services, BreastCheck was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of this, it is taking longer to get through the current screening round. Despite the ongoing challenges in recruitment and retention of staff and COVID-19 related absences, BreastCheck is back to nearly normal numbers attending for screening daily. We aim to be back to two-yearly screens by autumn this year. This is dependent on meeting the continued challenge of staff recruitment and retention.





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National Screening Service

Being breast aware

We continue to emphasise to our participants that BreastCheck is a screening service for well women within the population age range (50-69 years) and is not for women with symptoms. If a person has any concerns or symptoms concerning their breasts, they should not attend screening and should instead contact their GP who will give them the appropriate advice.

It is important that every woman is breast aware. This means knowing what is normal for her so that if any unusual change occurs, she will recognise it. If cancer is found early, treatment is more likely to be successful. It is therefore important for women to get into the habit of looking at and checking their breasts at least on a monthly basis. More information on techniques for checking your breasts is available on www.breastcheck.ie

Women who have additional questions regarding breast screening can contact Freephone 1800 45 45 55 from 9am-6pm, Monday to Friday; or email info@breastcheck.ie

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Murphy,
Chief Executive.

Teach Óstaí an Rí, 200 Sráid Parnell, Baile Átha Cliath D01 A3Y8. King's Inn House, 200 Parnell Street, Dublin 1, D01 A3Y8.
☎ 353 1 865 9300 ✉ info@screeningservice.ie www.screeningservice.ie



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